

Post-Secondary Continuation Rate

Population with any post-secondary, attending or not attending school
(Population with any post-secondary, attending or not attending school) +
(Population with a secondary school certificate, not attending school full-time)

Post-Secondary Completion Rate

Population with a post-secondary degree, certificate or diploma, attending or not attending school
(Population with a post-secondary degree, certificate or diploma, attending or not attending school) +
(Population with some post-secondary education without a degree, certificate or diploma, not attending school full-time)

Each indicator represents an estimate of the survival rate of a cohort as they move through the educational system; so if we multiply the percent of students who complete secondary school by the percent of students who continue to post-secondary studies by the percent of post-secondary students who complete post-secondary programs, we should get the overall proportion of the population who have attained post-secondary completion. In fact, the indicators do give approximately this result.

However, there still remains a question about the accuracy of these rates, given the highest level of schooling hierarchy. We do not know the precise number of individuals who have completed high school certificates, nor the precise number who have enrolled in non-university post-secondary programs as opposed to university programs. The category of “post-secondary” includes those who have attended both non-university and university programs and may have more than one degree or certificate. These indicators should, therefore, be considered as estimates. In some of the figures and tables in this study we have identified separate university and non-university completion rates. In these instances, the university level of achievement is more accurate than the non-university level, since some university students have also attended—and perhaps completed—non-university programs, but are not included in the non-university statistics.